

Interim Activity Report: Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 2.2-2534 of the Code of Virginia requires the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission to submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly. The document is to take the form of an executive summary outlining the interim activity and work of the Commission. The chairman is to submit the report no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The document is to be submitted for publication as a report document according to the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems and posted on the General Assembly's website. The following information covers the Commission's initial reporting period.



The General Assembly established the Commission by Chapters 654 and 659 of the 2008 Acts of Assembly. It serves a 19-county and four-city area of southwest Virginia. The 23 members represent state, local and regional governments; state and local tourism, education, cultural and music organizations; and the Virginia General Assembly.

The Commission became active following its creation in April 2008. After the appointment of members by the Governor and legislature, the Commission held an initial organizational meeting in Abingdon, Virginia on August 14, 2008. Senator William C. Wampler, Jr. was elected Chairman. Mr. Woody Crenshaw of Floyd County, President of Round the Mountain, was elected Vice Chairman. At that time, the Commission confirmed its commitment to the goal of encouraging the economic development of Southwest Virginia through the expansion of cultural heritage ventures and initiatives related to tourism and asset-based enterprises including Heartwood, the Southwest Virginia Artisan Gateway, The Crooked Road, Round the Mountain and related cultural heritage organizations and venues promoting entrepreneurial and employment opportunities. The Commission also established an organizational structure consisting of the following five Committees: (1) Executive, (2) Technology, (3) Financial/Fundraising, (4) Operations, and (5) Cultural Assets. During the interim until the duties of an Executive Director are established, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) would continue to provide staff support.

At its second meeting on October 14, 2008 in Floyd, Virginia, the Commission named members and chairs for the standing Committees. The Committees subsequently assumed responsibility for the selection of a website design firm, identification of regional cultural heritage venues and attractions, and completion of the design and property disposition that will enable the Heartwood Artisan Gateway to break ground in the spring. The Commission, assisted by DHCD, is actively pursuing each of these steps.